

SEALING ARRANGEMENT

The invention relates to a sealing arrangement.

The sealing arrangement can be employed to maintain a seal in any suitable pressure vessel including but not limited to a gas turbine engine.

In a particular problem addressed by the invention it is required to maintain a seal between two relatively moveable parts which form part of a barrier between a region of high fluid pressure and a region of low fluid pressure. One example where such a seal is required is between platforms of a stator vane in a gas turbine engine.

Conventionally adjacent faces of adjoining stator vane platforms are formed with a groove in the axial direction of the engine. A flat sealing strip is inserted into the groove thereby presenting a convoluted flow path and a reduced flow area for fluid to leak from the high pressure side to the low pressure side.

It is apparent that while the leakage is reduced, there may be a significant leakage flow, thereby reducing the overall efficiency of the engine.

Alternatively the sealing strip may be formed as a wedge and forced into the grooves such that the leakage path past the abutting faces of the adjoining platforms is substantially reduced.

This method has significant demerit as it increases the overall rigidity of the stator vane assembly. If relative movement of the stator vanes is required, by way of non limiting example, in order to alter the radial location of the stator vanes during operation of the engine, then such a configuration will limit the degree to which this can be achieved.

In accordance with the present invention there is provided a sealing arrangement for sealing a leakage gap between at least two relatively moveable parts which are adjacent to each other in a flow path between a region of high fluid pressure and a

region of low fluid pressure, at least one groove being provided along each adjacent face of the relatively moveable parts, wherein the sealing arrangement further comprises at least two resilient sealing strips, each strip having a portion formed along at least part of its width to locate in the at least one groove, the remaining portion of each of the at least two sealing strips having a substantially flat surface, the at least two sealing strips being configured such that in operation their substantially flat surfaces abut each other.

Preferably the at least two sealing strips are formed such that the portion shaped to locate in the at least one groove is of arcuate cross-sectional configuration.

Alternatively the at least two sealing strips are formed such that the portion shaped to locate in the at least one groove is of "C" shaped cross-sectional configuration.

Preferably the at least two relatively moveable parts form part of a seal disposed around a substantially cylindrical pressure vessel. Alternatively the at least two relatively moveable parts form part of a seal disposed around a substantially frusto-conical pressure vessel.

Preferably the pressure vessel is a gas turbine engine.

The invention is a means for sealing between two relatively moveable parts including, but not limited to, platforms of stator vanes and seal liner segments in a gas turbine engine.

The invention and how it may be carried into practice will now be described in detail with reference, by way of example, to embodiments illustrated in the accompanying figures, in which:

Figure 1 illustrates part of a stator vane assembly incorporating a sealing arrangement in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 shows an enlarged view of one embodiment of a sealing strip for use in a stator vane assembly incorporating a sealing arrangement, and;

Figure 3 shows an enlarged cross sectional view of part of the stator vane assembly shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4 shows a cross sectional view of part of a stator vane platform comprising an alternative embodiment of the sealing arrangement in accordance with the present invention.

The stator vane assembly 10 presented in Figure 1 forms part of a conventional gas turbine engine well known in the art and will not be described in this specification beyond that necessary to gain an understanding of the invention.

The stator vane assembly 10 comprises an annular array of stator vanes 12, each of which is formed with a platform 14 which is located on the engine (not shown) by any suitable means. A groove 16 is formed into the face 18 of each platform 14 which is adjacent to a circumferentially adjoining platform 14. Each of the grooves 16 is aligned substantially in the axial direction of the engine shown at "A". A sealing strip 20 is located in each of the grooves 16 and is substantially of the same length as the platform 14. The sealing strips 20 are formed such that at least part of their width is shaped to locate in the groove 16, the remaining portion of the sealing strip 20 being substantially flat.

In operation a surface indicated at "B" on the platform 14 will be exposed to a higher fluid pressure than a surface indicated at "C" on the platform 14.

A sealing strip 20 is presented in Figure 2. It comprises a resilient member formed along at least part of its width such that the portion shaped to locate in the groove 16 is arcuate or "C" shaped, hereafter referred to as the formed portion 22. The remaining portion of the sealing strip is substantially flat, hereafter referred to as the flat portion 24.

An enlarged view of a cross section showing detail of the formed portion 22 of the sealing strips 20 located in the platform grooves 16 is presented in Figure 3. The flat portions 24 of the sealing strips 20 are in communication with each other substantially along their length, although it will be appreciated that the formed portion 22 may be a loose fit in the groove 16 and that adjacent flat portions 24 may be spaced apart when the engine is not in operation.

In operation the flow of fluid between the high pressure surface side "B" and the low pressure surface side "C" the sealing strips 20 and the platforms 14 will force the flat portions 24 of the adjacent sealing strips 20 together, forming a seal. High pressure fluid entering the volume partially enclosed by the formed portion 22 will cause the formed portion 22 to expand into the groove 16, thereby forming a seal.

It will be appreciated that the greater the difference between the high pressure fluid acting on surface "B" and the low pressure fluid acting on surface "C" then the greater the force pressing the flat portions 24 together and deforming the formed portions 22, and hence providing a better seal.

It will be appreciated that the formed portion 22 may be any shape which fulfils the same function, such as an "E" or "W" shaped cross-sectional configuration. Such a "W" or "E" shaped portion 26 is shown in figure 4.

It will be appreciated that the sealing strips 20 will also provide an adequate seal if they are aligned substantially at an angle to the axial direction of the pressure vessel.

It will also be appreciated that the invention may be employed in any suitable application, including but not limited to, the compressor and turbine sections of a gas turbine engine and seal liner segments of a gas turbine engine.

It will be appreciated that figures 3 and 4 may, in addition to that described above, represent an enlarged view of a seal interface between adjacent seal liner segments.

The configurations shown in the accompanying figures are diagrammatic. The design of the vanes, the vane platforms, the grooves and the sealing strips may vary between designs. Likewise the configuration and relative positioning of the described components may differ in different embodiments of the invention.